

PENNSYLVANIA MINE PORTAL CLOSURE GUIDELINES

1. Mine Opening Assessments

- a. All mine openings proposed for closure will be evaluated using the *PENNSYLVANIA PROTOCOL FOR ASSESSING POTENTIAL HIBERNACULA* (Appendix A).
- b. If a mine opening has one or more characteristics making bat occupation unlikely (see *Assessing Suitability of Caves and/or Abandoned Mines for Bat Surveys* in Appendix A), the portal or opening may be closed at any time without further consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS-PAFO) or Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC).
- c. If a mine opening is potentially suitable for bats, the opening will undergo a bat survey in accordance with the specifications detailed in Appendix A. *Note: Surveyors must be a qualified bat surveyor and obtain a valid permit from the PGC before proceeding with surveys.*
- d. Appendices A and B will be provided to qualified surveyors to conduct bat surveys so they are aware of the survey protocols, bat detection thresholds, closure guidelines, and reporting procedures. Survey results will meet the reporting and documentation requirements outlined below.
- e. Given the effects of white-nose syndrome on bats, it is recommended that any site where bats are captured be given priority for the installation of bat-friendly gates.

2. Survey Results and Remedial Actions

The action to be taken at a mine opening depends upon the bat survey results, as detailed below, based on the Detection Method used (see Appendix A).

- a. Detection Method 1 – Harp trap w/Bat Detector (see Appendix A).

Capture Results ¹ / Opening	Action
No bats (of any species)	Close opening between June 1 and July 31. ²
≥ 1 Indiana bat or northern long-eared bat	Consult with USFWS-PAFO <u>and</u> install bat-friendly gate between May 15 and August 30.
≥ 1 State listed species	Consult with PGC <u>and</u> install bat-friendly gate between May 15 and August 30.
1 to 2 bats (Not including any federally or State listed bats)	Install bat-friendly gate <u>or</u> close opening between June 1 and July 31. <i>Note, it is recommended that any site where bats are captured be given priority for the installation of bat-friendly gates.</i>
≥ 3 bats (Not including any federally or State listed bats)	Install bat-friendly gate between May 15 and August 30 <u>or</u> consult with PGC.

¹ These are cumulative capture results from the entire fall survey period.

² A seasonal restriction is warranted to avoid sealing potentially undetected federally and State listed bats within mines.

Appendix B

- b. Detection Method 2 – Visual survey w/Bat Detector (see Appendix A). *Note: Detection Method 1 is the preferred method and will be used in all cases except where it is too dangerous to approach cave and/or mine openings.*

Results ³ / Opening	Action
No bats detected (<i>i.e.</i> , zero bat passes entering or exiting mine opening)	Close opening between June 1 and July 31. ⁴
≥ 1 bat pass entering or exiting mine opening	Consult with USFWS-PAFO and PGC, <u>and</u> install bat-friendly gate between May 15 and August 30.

3. Reporting

In addition to the reporting requirements outlined in Appendix A, please include a summary of the proposed action (*e.g.*, gate installed, portal backfilled/sealed), date of action, and exact location (latitude/longitude) of all mine openings. Reports will be submitted to the PGC and USFWS-PAFO. See Appendix A for PGC and USFWS-PAFO contact information.

4. Gate Installation

All gates should be “bat-friendly” and constructed according to current gating guidelines for bat conservation. Gates should avoid changing the mine micro-climate. **The inclusion of doors on gates installed at mine portals is discouraged.** Footers of solid concrete or 4-foot wide expanded metal, anchored below gate, is required to stabilize substrate and discourage vandalism. For more information on bat-friendly gates, see *Agency Guide to Cave and Mine Gates 2009*, available here: <http://www.batcon.org/pdfs/AgencyGuideCaveMineGating2009.pdf>.

³ These are cumulative results from the entire fall survey period.

⁴ A seasonal restriction is warranted to avoid sealing potentially undetected federally and State listed bats within mines.